



# State Representative Dolly Powers

Dear Friend,

The 2006 legislature closed up shop on time with agreement on some significant advances, particularly in transportation, the environment, job creation initiatives and education.

The Roadmap for the Future authorizes an additional \$2.3 billion for improvements to our infrastructure, expands regional transportation hubs, moves forward on ferry service, freight barges and faster acquisition of train cars.

Our Jobs for the 21st Century initiative is a combination of tax cuts and incentives, operational funds for small businesses and educational programs to enhance science and math achievement and teacher preparation.

Despite the successes on a number of fronts, important issues were not addressed because the majority party that controls the legislative agenda refused to act. These areas include a broad energy policy to control the price of gasoline and heating oil; Gov. Rell's proposed phase out of the estate tax was ignored for partisan reasons; and Gov. Rell's proposed elimination of the car tax stalled under Democratic leadership.

Eminent domain reform was the focus of numerous public hearings but was left on the table despite overwhelming public sentiment to restrict government's ability to seize private property.

As always, I look forward to hearing from all my constituents on your concerns and issues. Thank you for the honor and privilege of representing the 151st District in the state House of Representatives. Please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Sincerely,



State Representative

CLAUDIA "DOLLY" POWERS

Proudly Serving the 151<sup>st</sup> District

Greenwich ★ Connecticut

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# 2006 LEGISLATIVE REPORT



State Representative

CLAUDIA "DOLLY" POWERS

Proudly Serving the 151<sup>st</sup> District

Greenwich ★ Connecticut

# PROTECTING YOUR INTERESTS

## The Roadmap for the Future

The second phase of a sweeping, long-term approach to solving our transportation problems was approved in strong bipartisan fashion. This plan authorizes an additional \$2.3 billion to create a workable commuter rail system linking New Haven, Hartford and Springfield, Mass., expansion of the Shoreline East system and major improvements to highways I-84 and I-95.

Over the next decade we will see efficient local transportation hubs to move cars and trucks off I-95 and other highways and allow commuters to flow more freely. This approach has significant implications for our environment, economic development and will help preserve our highest-in-the-nation standard of living in Connecticut. In partnership with Gov. M. Jodi Rell, I pledge that the laws we passed in the last two years will be fully implemented and funded.

## Environment

I co-sponsored the Clean Car bill that will go a long way toward improving the air we breathe. Air pollution did not occur overnight and it will take some time to reduce the amount of pollutants in our atmosphere. Beginning in 2009 the Department of Environmental Protection commissioner will be required to establish a greenhouse gas labeling program for all cars and trucks sold or leased in Connecticut. In addition, the commissioner will also establish or contract for a public education initiative to teach Connecticut residents about the effects greenhouse gases have on our environment.

We also created a lobster trap buy-back program and an economic assistance fund for commercial fishermen who have seen their businesses decimated by the destruction of the Long Island Sound lobster population beginning in 1999.



*“Once Again,  
I Thank You  
for the  
Privilege of  
Serving the  
People of  
Greenwich in  
the State  
House.”*



Rep. Claudia “Dolly” Powers joins, from right, Representatives Lile R. Gibbons and Livvy Floren , on the floor of the state House during a break in debate.

## Creating Jobs

Much of our job creation agenda presented at the outset of the session was enacted in a bipartisan effort. I fought against measures that would drive employers out of Connecticut, including punitive mandates to increase health care and energy costs. We rolled back taxes on new equipment to help businesses expand and eliminated the corporate tax surcharge.

## Alcohol Possession by Minors

After six years of work and adoption in more than 50 Connecticut communities, minors may not possess alcohol on public or private property after Oct. 1, 2006. The first offense is an infraction and a fine is imposed for subsequent offenses. A parent, guardian or spouse over 21 may still serve alcohol to a minor - this law is unchanged. And alcohol use in a religious ceremonies is also unchanged. No new police powers are created but having a uniform state law should help enforcement at the local level.

## College Funding Breakthrough

This year the legislature also made contributions to the Connecticut Higher Education Trust Fund, CHET, tax deductible up to \$10,000 for families and \$5,000 for single filers per year. Many of you contacted me about this issue and I'm thrilled that we got it done. This deduction will be applicable for tax years starting with Jan. 1, 2006.

## Eminent Domain

The legislature established the office of property rights ombudsman to help property owners with eminent domain procedures and to mediate disputes with government agencies. However, the majority party's refusal to address the central problems with eminent domain remains a major failure of the session. Since the troubling U.S. Supreme Court decision was handed down in June 2005 twenty other states have acted to restrict government's ability to seize private property to benefit private developers. Connecticut must join these other states.

## Teacher Pension Funding

Connecticut has an obligation to our state educators and I will continue to advocate for a constitutional amendment for full funding of the state teachers' pensions. Our House caucus made this a key part of our 2006 agenda and fully supported funding the pension over the next two years by adding \$246 million to the accounts. But if we fail to enact permanent funding and shortchange our teachers as we have in the past, we will leave our children and grandchildren with a bill that they can't pay.

## Rainy Day Fund

We allocated a significant portion of the projected budget surplus, roughly \$189 million, into the rainy day fund to hedge against future downturns in the state's economy. The rainy day fund (our state savings account) will be funded to \$795 million, the highest amount ever.

## Consumer Protection

Protecting personal identification from companies and individuals is a growing concern. The legislature banned the use of the Internet or e-mail to acquire information by posing as an Internet company without that business's authorization. The recent disclosure that more than 26 million veterans are at risk from identity thieves should be a wake up call. Identity theft costs billions every year and ranks at the top of all consumer complaints annually. Don't give out personal information!



## Promoting Internet Safety for Children

Recent tragedies resulting from teen use of a website called MySpace.com is a reminder to us that the Internet is a fantastic tool, but one where we should exercise particular caution regarding children and teen use.

- ★ Keep your identity private
- ★ Never get together with someone you "meet" online
- ★ Never respond to e-mail, chat comments, instant messages that are hostile, inappropriate or in any way make you feel uncomfortable
- ★ Talk with your children and set ground rules about going online

A site, [www.safeteens.com](http://www.safeteens.com), includes a number of links and basic rules for online safety for teens, guidelines for parents, blog safety information and a link called [staysafe.org](http://staysafe.org), which also is a great site.

The State of Connecticut offers a website located at [www.ct.gov/cybersafe](http://www.ct.gov/cybersafe) to help citizens learn more about safety and security on the Internet.